

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SANTO 02693 190439Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 MCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 TRSE-00 AID-05
PC-01 IO-13 /084 W
-----029342 190455Z /14

O 190400Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 4609
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LISBON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE IMMEDIATE
USCINCSO QUARRY HGTS CZ IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTO DOMINGO 2693

LONDON FOR ARA DAS BUSHNELL

PANAMA FOR ROBERT PASTOR, NSC

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, PINS, DR
SUBJECT: JCE FUNCTIONING IN SANTO DOMINGO AND MOST OTHER AREAS

1. THE VOTE-COUNT CONTINUED TODAY IN THE CAPITAL BUT
POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES CONTINUED TO DISTRACT OFFICIALS
MANNING THE OPERATION. DEPT IS ALREADY AWARE OF THE
SITUATION IN SANTIAGO (REF SANTO DOMINGO 2687). WE
ASSUME REPORTS OF HARASSMENT IN OTHER AREAS OUTSIDE THE
CAPITAL DISTRICT, INCLUDING CONTINUED CLOSURE OF JCE
CENTERS, CAN BE CREDITED.

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2. HERE, THE SO-CALLED "BANDA COLOR'A", I.E., YOUNG
REFORMISTA TOUGHS, WERE SEEN AT JCE'S DISTRICT HQ IN
NATIONAL CONGRESS BUILDING TEARING UP BALLOT BOXES
(FROM WHICH TALLIES ALREADY HAD BEEN TAKEN) AND HECTORING
VOTE-COUNTERS WITH CHANTS OF "FRAUDE*" AND "VIVA BALAGUER*"

3. DESPITE THIS VANDALISM, JCE OFFICIALS ASSURED EMBOFF

THEY HELD IN SAFE-KEEPING ALL DOCUMENTS NECESSARY TO COMPLETE VOTE TALLY. EMBASSY INFORMED TONIGHT (8:30) THAT APPROXIMATELY TWO-THIRDS OF DISTRICT VOTE HAS BEEN TALLIED, SHOWING PRD HOLDING TWO-TO-ONE MARGIN.

4. THE PRO-BALAGUER FORCES USE OF UNSUBSTANTIATED CLAIMS OF FRAUD ON THE PART OF THE PRD DURING TUESDAY'S ELECTION, A THEME WE DETECTED YESTERDAY, IS IN USE ACROSS THE BOARD IN ALL SECTORS OF THE REFORMIST PARTY, THE GOVERNMENT AND NOW THE MILITARY (SEE DAO REPORTS ON THIS SUBJECT). THE IMPLICATION, OF COURSE, IS THAT, IN FACT, THE PRD VOTE WAS BIG.

5. EARLIER IN DAY, PATROLS OF UNIFORMED MILITARY, ACCOMPANIED BY SECOND-LEVEL REFORMIST CIVILIANS, WERE SAID TO HAVE TRIED TO REOCCUPY CONGRESS BUILDING BUT RETIRED AFTER JUNTA OFFICIALS OVER-SEEING VOTE COUNT FACED THEM DOWN. THIS REPORT CAME FROM PRD POLL-WATCHERS WHO SAID THEY WITNESSED EPISODE. TONIGHT BANDA COLOR'A GANGS ARE REPORTED ROAMING THROUGH OUTLYING BARRIOS LOOKING FOR TROUBLE. ANY SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS HERE COMING TO OUR ATTENTION WILL BE REPORTED NIACT.

6. IN MID-MORNING, EMBOFF VISITED JCE NATIONAL HQ (REF SANTO DOMINGO 2659) TO GET FEEL FOR SITUATION AND TALK FURTHER WITH NATIONAL JCE MEMBERS, INCLUDING CHAIRMAN CASTILLO. MEETING BEGAN
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RATHER STIFFLY, BUT GRADUALLY CASTILLO, WHOM WE HAVE ALWAYS REGARDED AS AN UPRIGHT GENTLEMAN, RELAXED. CONVERSATION ADDED LITTLE TO WHAT WE KNEW OF THE SITUATION AS OF THAT MOMENT, EXCEPT THAT HE MENTIONED AT ONE POINT THE LEGAL POSSIBILITY OF THE PROCESS STRETCHING OUT FOR AS LONG AS 30 DAYS. HE REPEATED HIS OWN ESTIMATE STATED EARLIER, HOWEVER, THAT COMPLETION OF THE COUNT WOULD TAKE SEVERAL DAYS.

7. APPREHENSION AMONG JCE EMPLOYEES WAS QUITE OBVIOUS; CASTILLO MAINTAINED HIS CUSTOMARY SERENITY, BUT HIS COLLEAGUES SHOWED SURE SIGNS THEY RECOGNIZED THEY ARE IN THE EYE OF A HURRICANE. PRESENCE OF CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF HEAVILY ARMED TROOPS IMMEDIATELY OUTSIDE MAIN ENTRANCE AND INDIVIDUAL TROOPERS INSIDE THE BUILDING DID LITTLE TO REDUCE TENSIONS. STRONGEST EVIDENCE THAT RESUMPTION OF JCE ACTIVITIES ARE GENUINE WAS PRESENCE OF PRD POLL-WATCHERS KEEPING AN EYE ON THINGS, CONTRARY TO REPORTS YESTERDAY THEY WOULD REJECT ANY EFFORTS TO RESTART THE COUNT.

8. EMBOFF THEN WENT TO SEE PRD LEADERS IN PRIVATE HOME IN CENTER OF CITY. PENA GOMEZ STILL LYING LOW AND WAS ONLY IMPORTANT PARTY LEADER NOT PARTI-

CIPATING IN NON-STOP MEETING, LISTENING TO RADIO WHICH BY THEN HAD
RESUMED NEWSCASTS, AND HANDLING TELEPHONES WHICH IN CONSTANT USE.

9. SITUATION IN SANTIAGO AND OTHER PLACES DISCUSSED
AT LENGTH, BUT ALL ATTENTION SEEMED CENTERED ON VOTE-
COUNTING AT CONGRESS BUILDING. CONSENSUS OF LEADERSHIP
WAS THAT THE PROCESS SHOULD NOT LAST MORE THAN
24-48 HOURS. PARTY HAD TALLIED THE FINAL NUMBERS (PRD
WITH A NATIONAL LEAD OF NEARLY 500,000 VOTES) AND NOW ONLY
AWAIT DEVELOPMENTS. MOOD, HOWEVER, WAS NOT ONE OF
OVER-CONFIDENCE; RATHER IT REFLECTED SAME DETERMINATION
SHOWN BY PARTY LEADERS IN RECENT DAYS NOT REPEAT NOT TO
BE CHEATED OF THEIR FAIRLY WON VICTORY. THIS MOOD SEEMED
EVEN STRONGER THAN IT WAS WEDNESDAY, BUOYED BY INCREASED
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INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION TO THE SITUATION HERE. AS IMPORTANT
TO THE LEADERSHIP WAS THE ACCUMULATING EVIDENCE THAT
DOMINICANS WERE BEGINNING TO CLIMB DOWN OFF THE FENCE AND
WERE TAKING STANDS, NO MATTER HOW MEEK, FOR A CONSTITUTIONAL
SOLUTION. THEY SEEMED CONFIDENT THIS TREND WAS SNOWBALLING.

10. COMMENT: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE VOTE-COUNT NOW
IS THAT IT IS HOLDING THE COUNTRY IN THRALL AS DOMINICANS
AWAIT THE OUTCOME. THE CONFLICTING CLAIMS OF
VICTORY BY BOTH THE GOVERNMENT (REPORTED SEPTTEL) AND
THE PRD SEEMS TO HAVE HEADED THE CONTENDING FORCES
TOWARD A CONFRONTATION.

11. PRECEDING PREPARED PRIOR TO TV ADDRESS OF PRESIDENT
BALAGUER, REPORTED IN SEPTTELS.
YOST

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NNN

Message Attributes

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Draft Date: 19 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
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Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
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From: SANTO DOMINGO
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